

Cooperative Conservation

“Management of landscapes that will provide for the long-term well-being of both natural populations and human populations requires the cooperative efforts of all who live in and manage that landscape.”

—William L. Halvorson
National Parks and Protected
Areas: Their Role in
Environmental Protection

Partnerships have become an essential tool for carrying out the mission of the National Park Service. Park managers are increasingly working with neighboring communities, state and federal agencies, corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and universities to deal with a wide range of issues and maximize limited resources. For example, they understand that effectively addressing watershed management and protection, the spread of exotic plants and animals, or the recovery of endangered or declining species involves working cooperatively with myriad partners, from state agencies and private landowners to university researchers and committed volunteers. In addition to tackling resource threats coming from outside park boundaries, managers seek partnerships with other institutions and individuals to realize the unparalleled value of the parks for learning and scientific research. Partnerships also recognize that “two heads are better than one,” and as the articles in this chapter demonstrate, frontline park managers are developing the expertise to build successful long-term relationships that result in tangible benefits to both the parks and their partners. The administration also values the vitality of cooperative efforts for resource protection; in 2003 it launched the Cooperative Conservation Initiative, ushering in a new era for partnerships in the parks. The parks play an essential role in the social and economic fabric of the nation, and partnerships for cooperative conservation are an explicit recognition of this evolving reality.

Effigy Mounds National Monument is located in the Yellow River watershed in northeastern Iowa, where the National Park Service and other government agencies and nongovernmental organizations are cooperating to develop a model in which local leadership is educated and empowered to steward natural resources and sustain a healthy environment.

